



Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

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2nd Kentucky Honor Flight Taking More Veterans To WWII Memorial

39 World War II Kentucky Veterans Fly to D.C. June 11

(FRANKFORT, KY June 5, 2008) Honor Flight of the Bluegrass director Brian Duffy is fighting time. In the three weeks since the first Honor Flight of Kentucky brought 40 World War II veterans to the World War II Memorial on the Washington Mall, more than 350 of their Kentucky comrades have died. Seventeen more pass every day.

Of the 40 WWII veterans originally scheduled for the inaugural flight on May 21, four passed away before the departure date – the last one just two days before.

“I wish everyone in Kentucky could have been there with me to greet our veterans,” said KDVA Commissioner Leslie Beavers, Brigadier General US Army (Ret.), who met the Honor Flight veterans at the Memorial on May 21. “It’s hard to express the emotion of seeing those veterans at *their* Memorial, and how much it means to them.”

Thirty-nine Kentucky World War II veterans will depart on June 11, plus another 40 each on flights scheduled in August, September and October. But more than 100 still wait to hear about another flight, and hope it won’t be too late for them.

“This noble undertaking has a very finite window,” Duffy says. “Our youngest World War II veterans are now in their mid-80s. Financial support equals more veterans being able to make the trip.”

More flights on larger planes to accommodate more veterans requires more money. Honor Flight is run entirely by volunteers and financed by donations. The flight, meals, ground transportation and individual support is completely free to the veterans.

Each flight, based on 40 veterans and 15 guardian/escorts (who pay their own way), costs between \$10,000 and \$11,000, Duffy says. That breaks down to about \$8,000 in air fare, \$1,200 for the bus from the airport to the Memorial and back, \$1,100 for three meals including a restaurant buffet, and \$700 for miscellaneous, including T-shirts, memorial books, ID badges and lanyards.

To begin Kentucky Honor Flights, Honor Flight Bluegrass Chapter received \$25,000 from the Veterans Program Trust Fund, which is administered by the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs. Since May 21, Honor Flight Bluegrass has received approximately \$10,500 in direct donations, which with existing funds should cover the June, August and September flights. The cost of the October flight and possible additional flights is not yet covered. Honor Flight Bluegrass is also seeking additional guardians for the September and October flights.

To make donations, volunteer to help, or find out more about Honor Flight Bluegrass Chapter, go to www.honorflightbluegrass.com.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there are an estimated 36,569 World War II veterans living in Kentucky.

As the national Honor Flight organization notes, “very few of these senior veterans have the logistical knowledge or physical strength to complete an unescorted conventional trip to Washington, D.C.

“It is our mission to honor as many of these remaining selfless ‘ordinary people who saved the world’ as we can by providing them an organized and expense-paid, escorted day trip to visit their memorial.

“Volunteer guardians (escorts) pay their own way, and personally assist the senior veterans throughout the trip.”

The veterans and guardians on this second Honor Flight will meet at the Louisville Airport at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 11. At the Fort Knox Reception Lounge, and veterans will be available for press photographs and interviews until 9 a.m.

